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"Prosecutors do it with conviction"



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

1. We have been working with Margaret Janeke from *Reach for Life, No Regrets* for the past four years in our community safety forum in the south of Johannesburg, namely, the *Southern Community Safety and Development Forum (SCSDF)*. She is a valued member of this forum.
2. SCSDF
This forum was formed for the communities in the south of Johannesburg and is facilitated by the NPA. It is now in its fourth year. It was initially formed to address a host of issues surrounding crime, ranging from liquor outlets, slum housing, hi-jacked properties with illegal activities, drugs (particularly in schools), school transporters, schools safety programmes, diversion, mediation and community patrollers. The issues that this forum addresses however are not restricted to these. The community is building relationships and the joint efforts are starting to show great rewards.
3. Purpose
The primary purposes of the forum is to-
 - find solutions to fighting crime in the communities as a partnership between government and community;
 - forge relationships between stakeholders;
 - have more effective joint efforts of all law enforcers;
 - resolve problems between stakeholders;

Justice in our society, so that people can live in freedom and security

to empower the various sectors within the community to take responsibility in the struggle against crime;

- delegate social, economic and other issues that impact on crime but which fall outside the mandate of the law enforcers to other departments, NGO's, FBO's or sectors within the community; and
- to assist the police and other law enforcers in any manner possible.

4. Reach for Life No Regrets

The NPA works with several NGO's or NPO's regarding the training and development of our youth. However, it is my experience that only the programs where time is spent and counselling done with the learners, is real or indeed any progress made. The program of *Reach for Life No Regrets* is one such program. The mere teaching of learners what drugs look like and what they do, simply increases their curiosity to experiment. At the criminal courts we are faced with the true devastation of families and their finances by drugs. Some parents have pleaded with us as prosecutors not to give their children bail when they are arrested for drug possession. They say then at least they will know where they are and that they will have a roof over their heads. A very sad state indeed.

Margaret and her team bring hope into the situation. They spend time every school day with the children for certain periods. They hope to spend a five-year period with a school so that by the time they have reached matric, they truly have a new mindset. The program primarily empowers the learners about self-worth; and once that is learned, they are empowered to say no to drugs, sex and other damaging behaviours. The schools, in which the program has been run, have shown remarkably improved behaviour and marks. Even the teachers are encouraged and feel more positive. While these results can be measured, I believe that this program and the love and dedication shown by Margaret and her team will have immeasurable results for the lives of the learners impacted. And they in turn will impact the lives of others.


Statistics show that drugs and alcohol is the cause of 70% of our crime. If we can work on this root cause, the results will automatically follow. It is also well known that the success rate of rehabilitation of hardened drug addicts is very low. However, the prevention of drugs at an early age has a far greater impact. This is where RFLNR comes in.

It is not always possible for the team to carry out their five-year plan due to financial restrictions. Some of her team are volunteers and do it for the love of the children. However,

in order for the program to be fully effective and sustainable, **RFLNR needs funding.**

This work *must* be continued and greatly extended if we are to reach our youth and not lose them to alcohol and drugs. They need to have hope in a future. They need to know that they are valuable and worthy. Generally speaking, the schools are **not doing that** for them. And neither is the government. So who then? The community is the **only source of hope**. As part of the community your contributions to this excellent, tried-and-tested, program will build the lives of our future generation. It will also impact on our crime statistics.

I personally am hoping to extend the program to another area which I serve, namely, the Westbury, Riverlea, Crosbie area (next to Sophiatown). These areas are rife with drug and alcohol abuse. Almost every street has a drug and illegal liquor outlet. We are naturally working with the police to eradicate them, but we need to empower the learners. Government cannot do that.



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